

REMARKS

Claims 1-15, 38 and 40-42 remain pending. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-10, 15, 38, 40 and 41 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Duffy et al (U.S. Publication No. 6,086,611). The Examiner asserts that the cited reference describes a self-expanding stent that has a plurality of rings in a proximal, central and distal section that are all aligned along a common longitudinal axis. Applicants respectfully traverse. It is to be initially noted that the cited reference is clearly directed to **expandable** stents rather than self-expanding stents (col 2, lines 8-15). Claims 1-15 call for the cylindrical body to self-expand. Moreover, while the Examiner asserts that the rings of the various sections are aligned along a common axis, this is clearly not the case. The described stent has a bifurcated structure wherein each of the two distal sections as well as the central section have rings that are arranged about two axes which are necessarily offset relative to the axis of the proximal section. While the Examiner ignores both the peaks and the axis of one of the two distal section branches, the fact that the central section has rings that are arranged about two axes cannot reasonably be ignored while including the peaks of both branches in the peak count. The rings of the central section are therefore not arranged about a **common** axis let along the same axis about which the rings of the proximal section are arranged. Anticipation is therefore clearly avoided.

Furthermore, it is respectfully submitted that cited reference fails to address the problem of configuring a **self-expanding** stent for use at a bifurcation. A bifurcated stent would require maintaining both branches in an unexpanded state during insertion into the vascular bifurcation. No teaching is offered in this regard while the present invention addresses and solves the problem with a stent configuration wherein all of its expanding rings are arranged about a common axis. It is respectfully submitted that obviousness is therefore effectively avoided.

Claims 11-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Duffy et al in view of Guruwaiya (U.S. Patent No. 6,251,136). In light of the non-obviousness of the underlying independent claim 1 as was argued above, it is respectfully submitted that all claims depending therefrom similarly avoid obviousness.

Claim 42 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Duffy et al. In light of the non-obviousness of the underlying independent claim 38 as was argued above, it is respectfully submitted that all claims depending therefrom similarly avoid obviousness.

In light of the above remarks, applicants earnestly believe the application to be in condition for allowance and respectfully request that it be passed to issue.

The commissioner is authorized to charge any deficiencies in fees or credit any overpayments to our Deposit Account No. 06-2425.

Respectfully submitted,

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